

INTERVIEW WITH STEVE KUFRIN  
JANUARY 19, 2005 BY DOROTHE NORTON

MS. NORTON: Steve, where were you born, and when?

MR. KUFRIN: I was born in October of 1942 in New Ulm, which is in Brown County Minnesota. My father was a Veterinarian who had a practice in Benson, MN. It wasn't long before my mother and I moved from Winthrop, where her parents lived to Benson. That's where I grew up and graduated from High School and worked for a bunch of years as a news and sports editor of the Benson newspaper.

MS. NORTON: What was your dad's name?

MR. KUFRIN: He went by Dr. R. S. Kufrin. He didn't like Rubin.

MS. NORTON: And your Mom's name?

MR. KUFRIN: Mom's first name was Victoria, or "Tory". She was a schoolteacher for quite a few years in Benson. She also helped my Dad. They had four kids to get up too.

MS. NORTON: What did you do in your early years? Did you like to walk through the woods and look at the birds? What did you do, anything special?

MR. KUFRIN: I'll answer that by telling you this, which I tell my girls quite often; we played football. I was a three-year starter on the varsity football team in high school. After every Friday night game, my friend who had a 1937 or '47 Ford parked by the school. He had it fully loaded with all of our hunting gear for the weekend. We had food, shotguns, shells, waders, hip boots and all the rest of our clothes in there. As soon as the football game was done and we could get out of the locker room, or got back to school on the bus; the first thing we did was to head for his car, jump and we headed to Lake Johanna, which is in Pope County, northwest of Benson, my hometown. My father leased some land and there was a little hunting cabin there. We would spend the entire weekend there. So that gives you an idea pretty much of where my interests were.

MS. NORTON: Did you have any hobbies other than football? Did you like to read a lot or ...?

MR. KUFRIN: I read quite a bit.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have a job before you graduated High School?

MR. KUFRIN: Oh yeah, I had the various typical high school jobs, mowing lawns, raking lawns, newspaper delivery. I weighed gravel in the gravel pit by Swift Falls. They

were just the menial jobs like that where I earned 50 cents an hour. It seemed like a lot of money back then.

MS. NORTON: Did you hunt or fish when you were young?

MR. KUFRIN: Constantly.

MS. NORTON: What High School did you graduate from, and when?

MR. KUFRIN: I graduated from Benson High School in 1960.

MS. NORTON: What university did you attend?

MR. KUFRIN: I went to Morris College after I got out of the military. I served in the Air Force from 1960 to 1965 including three years in Great Britain at small intelligence base there. When I got out my father had cancer so I got a job just working around Benson. He died that October. I got out in May and he died in October so we didn't have a whole lot of time to spend together. Then I went to Wilmer Community College in Wilmer, MN. I was the Editor of the college newspaper and President of the Student Body. I was there for a couple of years as I recall. I helped the baseball coach and the football coach. We did fortunately have all of our classes; me and a good friend, we had all of our classes scheduled from about 11am on during the day so we could get out and hunt every morning. We did a lot of hunting. East of Benson and north of Degraht there was a very good deer lake that we hunted at. I knew the owners through my father and his being a Veterinarian; we had permission to hunt a couple of different private properties. We'd go out there to hunt and still be back at school in time for our first class at 11am.

MS. NORTON: From Wilmer College, did you go over the university after that?

MR. KUFRIN: No. When I finished there; I didn't get a degree. I came up just a couple credits short. I wanted to work and make some money. I thought I could always go back, but that didn't happen. I ended up staying at the newspaper for quite a few years. I was there until I left to join the FWS.

MS. NORTON: So what branch of the military did you say you were in?

MR. KUFRIN: I was in the Air Force. I was in for five years. I was in England at Travis Air Force Base for three years.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have any decorations or medals for your service? Did you ever do anything special that would have earned you special recognition?

MR. KUFRIN: I do. It was nothing associated with any military action, but was the honor student of my class when I was at the Air Force Tech School. I was at the Tech School at Biloxi, Mississippi. I think that was for nine months. I graduated at the honor student of my class so I had the opportunity to select my own duty station, so that's why I ended up in England.

MS. NORTON: After you got out of the Service and college and everything what was your idea about the future regarding what it was you wanted to do?

MR. KUFRIN: I knew I wanted to get into conservation or something along that line, I didn't know exactly what. But as my career with the newspaper progressed it just sort of fit in naturally where I had the opportunity to become a columnist and write more about conservation all of the time. That's pretty much the background of how I got started. I was able fortunately to become acquainted with a lot of the folks who worked at the Benson Wetland Management District. I think that was the first District formed in MN. I got to know some of the fellows who worked there. They were friends of my father's. They helped steer me along in the conservation arena too. I felt very fortunate that I had the opportunity to do a lot of writing on conservation. I just felt that I wanted to continue. I did, and was very fortunate that eventually I was asked by FWS if I would like to join them in the Regional Office. I was honored to be asked, and I said yes, I would definitely like to do that. So, in 1998 or 99 I moved out here and started working in the RO under Dick Tolsman. He was actually the one who hired me. I think one of the reasons he hired me was because when I was in Benson doing the conservation writing I had the opportunity to form good relationships with a lot of the conservation organizations like Ducks Unlimited and Pheasants Forever.

MS. NORTON: Was Al Radke working out there then?

MR. KUFRIN: Al was Manager of the Morris Wetland Management District. I got to Al quite well. We became friends and he steered my conservation philosophy in the proper direction. I remember doing some things for Ducks Unlimited. For example; there was a gentleman who had some farmland up by Herman, MN. The FWS was trying to get an easement on it. I was able to go out and after a couple of weeks of meeting with this gentleman in Herman; I was able to talk him in to selling the easement. Al was very appreciative of that because neither he nor Dick could get it done. I don't mean that in a derogatory sense, but I just was able to talk his language. So the FWS was finally able to buy the easement from him. There were a lot of things like that. Al called my up from his office one day when I was at my office at the Waterfowl Association. He asked me if I would be willing to contact a number of the partners and solicit some funds so they could buy an earthmover to help them in the job of restoring wetlands. These big machines were made in Benson. I think I raised enough money through my contacts with the partners to get a couple of them so they could start restoring wetlands. That was just a little before the Partners for FWS got going. I was able to play a part by getting those

earthmovers for the Morris WMD. I was pretty proud of that. I always felt very good about the relationships I had with the fellows in the FWS. I always held them in the highest esteem. They treated me well, and I was honored whenever I could do something for them. A few years later I was hired by them. It turned out to be a very nice story.

MS. NORTON: I turned out to be to our [FWS] advantage to have you working with us. Can you tell me when where and how you met your wife?

MR. KUFRIN: I met my wife in Benson. She was teaching and I met her there. She dropped some pea soup off one morning on the way to work at the newspaper where I was at. That sort of really got the romance flourishing then! I figured that any gal who could make pea soup like that definitely had a place in my life. That's how we got going. We were married in a little Lutheran church at Lake Hassel north of Benson. It was an old church built by the homesteaders on the east side of the Lake. Lake Hassel was a diver lake for many years until it developed carp problems. There used to be tremendous amounts of Redhead and Canvasback, Scop and Mallard hunting out there. We were married out there by a Minister who graduated from Ustavis Aldophus College at St. Peter. His name Dwight Johnson and he was about as goofy for hunting and fishing as I was. Jill and I asked him if he would marry and he said he would be honored to. He married us and he also baptized both of our daughters in that church. That church is still standing. When we were married and when both our kids were baptized there, we planted trees in the homesteader's cemetery that is right across the gravel road from the church.

MS. NORTON: So you had two children?

MR. KUFRIN: We have two daughters; Emily is 16 and Becka is 14. They are still in High School, and going strong. They have a lot more energy than I do. They are good girls.

MS. NORTON: Was your duty station with FWS always in the Regional Office?

MR. KUFRIN: Yes, always in the Regional Office.

MS. NORTON: What did you think that the pay and benefits were like when you came to work for the federal government?

MR. KUFRIN: Wonderful, compared to working in Benson for the newspaper. They were hard to believe really.

MS. NORTON: Well, Benson is a small town. But when thinking about the future, you've got to...you did a good thing.

MR. KUFRIN: And of course with the wife and all, and the family coming I was very appreciative of the opportunity to join the FWS and work in the capacity that they hired me in.

MS. NORTON: When you started, what was your title and grade?

MR. KUFRIN: I can't remember it's been so long ago. Basically it was fundraising and working with various programs and partners and the cost share programs and making that run. I was helping the field stations as they prepared cost share proposals. I worked with our partners as they worked with our field stations. It was basically in that capacity as a cost share coordinator. I also did some fundraising. I can't remember what grade I started at.

MS. NORTON: Did you have promotion opportunities once you came to work for FWS?

MR. KUFRIN: I did. It was a little slow but there were a couple of in-grade promotions every year. I was happy with it.

MS. NORTON: They probably hired you at a pretty decent grade because of all of your knowledge and ability and past experience. Did you ever socialize with any of the people that you worked with?

MR. KUFRIN: I did when I was in Benson because it was easier to get together with them. But down here, I didn't. There was really no one that lived around here. You just didn't see them after you'd get off of work. But we did talk occasionally on the phone. Steve Wiles and I would hunt or fish together occasionally. It was mostly those kinds of outdoor activities that we did. Socially, not too much but occasionally we'd go out to dinner or a movie with Steve and his wife Diane.

MS. NORTON: Did your career with FWS affect your family in any way?

MR. KUFRIN: I don't think it affected them negatively, it was all positive. My girls enjoy fishing. They don't enjoy hunting. They knew some of the people I met through work. We've been to Twins baseball games with the Leech family a couple times. The girls had the chance to meet people that way, but now they are so busy it's just hard. Boy!

MS. NORTON: They keep you busy too!

MR. KUFRIN: They keep us rolling, that's for sure Dorothe!

MS. NORTON: When you came to FWS did you get any kind of special training? Or, was your training just on the job?

MR. KUFRIN: Not really. There was a little computer training at the Minnesota School of Business. But that was basically it. This computer stuff was fairly new for FWS too so we were all learning together.

MS. NORTON: I know that when we got those computers I didn't even want one! But I learned I guess.

MR. KUFRIN: Yeah, we had too!

MS. NORTON: So, when working at the Regional Office you just worked the regular office hours?

MR. KUFRIN: Yeah.

MS. NORTON: What were your day-to-day duties?

MR. KUFRIN: I helped run the cost share program and work with organizations like the Waterfowl Association. I helped them with ideas about cost share programs that they might be interested in. It was the same with Ducks Unlimited.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have to use any special tools or instruments?

MR. KUFRIN: Nothing really more than the computer and the telephone.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever witness any new FWS inventions?

MR. KUFRIN: Not that I can recall.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever work with animals?

MR. KUFRIN: Not while I was with FWS. I did when I was hunting but that's about it.

MS. NORTON: Did you feel that you got good support locally, regionally or federally for your work?

MR. KUFRIN: Oh regionally, yes. Everybody was very supportive.

MS. NORTON: How do you think the FWS was perceived by people outside the agency?

MR. KUFRIN: I think that the FWS is a well-kept secret. There's not a lot of people outside that really seem to know what the different responsibilities of FWS are, other than those pertaining to fish, mostly salmon I would guess and migratory waterfowl that can be hunted...that's about it. That's how people relate to FWS unless they get picked for poaching. Then they can relate pretty good.

MS. NORTON: So you felt like agency and community relations were pretty good?

MR. KUFRIN: I thought so.

MS. NORTON: That's good, because you worked with the community more so probably than other people did.

MR. KUFRIN: Yeah, especially when I was living out at Benson. I thought that the relationship between the folks from that office or the Morris office and the community were very good. That was a difficult time because conservation agencies, including the DNR were not always looked at favorably because of the drainage and the grasslands issues. Here's the FWS telling the public that we have save our waters and our grasslands and the communities with all of their agricultural people didn't always look favorably on the FWS or really try to understand why FWS felt that way. Now I think there is a greater understanding about the importance of wetlands and grasslands.

MS. NORTON: Were people confused sometimes...about who you worked for? Did they think you were DNR rather than FWS?

MR. KUFRIN: Yes, they did.

MS. NORTON: I still have people say that to me today. I had never heard of the FWS before I worked there. I knew that a duck and goose were birds, but I didn't know the difference. But I learned a lot and I really enjoyed working with the wonderful people at FWS.

MR. KUFRIN: That was it. That's why I enjoyed working there too. I didn't enjoy working in the cities, where I had to drive about 25 miles every day. But they were such wonderful people to work with. They are very honest and sincere and very committed. They were just real nice, wonderful people. It made going in to work very enjoyable because you knew you'd be with these people.

MS. NORTON: I know that about two months after I retired I woke up one Monday morning and I realized I didn't have to go to work. I thought "I don't have my job with those people any more!" I started to cry! Then I told myself that I was the one who had applied for retirement and I would have to figure out something to keep busy. That's why I'm so happy doing this volunteer job interviewing because I have learned so much

about what other divisions and people like you did to help the FWS. It's grown and improved a lot.

MR. KUFRIN: I really miss working now. But unfortunately now, I can't drive because of this brain tumor. The medical people were concerned about me having a seizure while I was driving. That was sort of the handwriting on the wall. Then, I was hoping that I might be about to work on the computer at home a bit, but physically, I'm not able to do it. I don't feel I'm strong enough to do it.

MS. NORTON: Well that might improve!

MR. KUFRIN: I certainly hope so!

MS. NORTON: I do too! Were there ever any special projects that you had to deal with, or any special committees that you had to deal with?

MR. KUFRIN: They were all pretty much special projects, but one that sticks out most recently was with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. I was able to talk to Bob Hauptman and Jim Hauptman and they were willing to do some original paintings that we were able to consolidate into one picture honoring the anniversary of the FWS. So through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation we were able to get them paid for their time and effort for their paintings and we were able to get the paintings printed on to one painting and come up with a little bit of an advertising scheme for the public. That was just one example. All of the money that came back in to F and W Foundation from the sale of these prints will be used as a cost share, or matching grant program in honor of the Hauptmans out on the land where we can do a restoration or we can do something in honor of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FWS. That's an example of one of the special projects I was involved in.

MS. NORTON: Were there every any major issues that you were involved in or had to deal with?

MR. KUFRIN: Nothing really significant, no.

MS. NORTON: Who were your supervisors?

MR. KUFRIN: Starting out, my supervisor was Dick Tolsman, then Rick Schultz and most recently Greg Brown. There was Dick first, then Rick and Then Dan Stennant and then Greg Brown.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever feel that there was a major impediment to your job or to your career?



MR. KUFRIN: Only that the FWS at times worked very slowly and didn't always have the money that was needed to accomplish what I wanted to do for a project. I'd have to wait for allocations from Congress, or budgets. At times it seemed like things went slow.

MS. NORTON: Who were some of the people that you knew outside of the FWS? Did you feel that they would have been able to work for FWS?

MR. KUFRIN: Tom Landwehr for one, he could have worked for FWS. He was just a wonderful young guy. He's with Ducks Unlimited. I think he's the Conservation Director for island Minnesota. No! Pardon me! He currently works for the Nature Conservancy. Roger Peterson worked for Ducks Unlimited. John Snyder lives in Alec and is with DU. We did a lot of work together for MWA. I was the editor of that magazine for about fifteen years. I have had a lot of work with them, not only through magazine, and projects and individual chapters but also with the Duck Stamp program. They helped with the State duck stamp program and that was always interesting.

MS. NORTON: And since you are all more or less striving for the same thing they feel pretty much the same, even though their job is not with the federal agency.

MR. KUFRIN: You betcha!

MS. NORTON: Smart people!

MR. KUFRIN: Very intelligent people! We want to do as much as possible for the fish and wildlife resources in Minnesota, our region, and the surrounding states on the upper Midwest. That's first and foremost. The dedication of these people is just absolutely incredible.

MS. NORTON: Whom do you feel were some of the individuals who helped shaped your career? Like in Region 3, were there names of people that you heard a lot of who just seemed to be striving to get the FWS up a bit?

MR. KUFRIN: Jim Leech was one, and Greg Brown. There were so many, Steve Wyles. All of those folks up there work so hard and so positively.

MS. NORTON: Do you remember who was President, or Director of FWS when you came to work?

MR. KUFRIN: I think Frank Dunkle had just left. Jim Watt was in there too.

MS. NORTON: I think when I ask these questions I should have the answers written down some place!

MR. KUFRIN: As far as President it was Ronald Reagan.

MS. NORTON: Steve, you know Jim Leech is here with me today too, and he has a couple of questions to ask you that would help round out this interview. It all relates to how you felt about working with FWS and what you saw and accomplished.

MR. LEECH: I think it's really to our benefit Steve, for you to document and give us a perspective on what you see that's changed in the Waterfowl conservation world from when you left the military and began working at Benson and then coming to work with FWS who is responsible for waterfowl conservation nationally. We'd like to know what your perspectives are for the future of waterfowl conservation. It would be a value for us get an idea of what you see that the future holds.

MR. KUFRIN: Well, I'm very concerned about the future for waterfowl. Probably not so much geese and ducks. I know when I was a kid we always said that the skies are black with ducks. As kids we had big imaginations too, but it seemed that there were many, many more waterfowl at that time. When I look back at all of the family scrapbooks of parents and relative and friends with big bags of mallards, redheads and canvasbacks, that's something you just don't see now. Maybe that's good too. I don't think we need that many birds in our freezers. But from one who loves to eat waterfowl, it's a wonderful experience to be able to go out and shoot a few; clean them and throw them in the pot or throw them in the oven for three or four hours and savor the smell of fresh duck, oh boy! There's nothing better. But since I've gotten out of the FWS, the situation hasn't gotten any better. I remember when I was in the military and writing to my Dad, he told me that there weren't any more pheasants out here, and this was in the early 1960's. He said that there were just a very few pheasants left. I wrote him back and asked him what the problem was. He told me that we were losing all of the grass out here! I got out of the military in 1965 and there were virtually no pheasants anywhere. That was one of my first lessons. You have to pay attention. Of course, he was out in the country all of the time being a Veterinarian and he noticed things like this. I then started to pick up on these things. Drainage and grassland destruction has still not ended and you wonder if it's ever going to. It still continues. The situation is much better because of the various programs that have been instituted now for landowners but gosh, there has been so much destruction that I wonder if our waterfowl resource will ever catch up. Especially some of the critical species; they are economically important like Canvasbacks, redheads and mallards. My brother and I have gone to Saskatchewan since 1969. When I first started going up, I was just amazed at the number of ducks we saw up there, even compared to Minnesota. And there were still a lot of ducks in Minnesota at that time. Since 1969 the numbers have plunged up there too. Their drainage and grassland destruction had been very forthright and it continues. The number of birds that I've seen in Canada is certainly not like it was in the late 60's and early 70's when I started going up there. My brother was up again this year. I think he said he's been up 24 years and he said that it was the worst hunting he'd ever experienced up there. It was the worst number of ducks, or the lowest number of ducks that he had ever seen since he

started going up there. He said there were geese all over. And by geese, he meant white-feathered geese and Canada geese. He said that the Canada and the snows and the white fronts and the blues were just thick. So while the geese are doing pretty good the ducks are still having problems.

MR. LEECH: What's the answer? What do we do in the future to reverse this problem?

MR. KUFRIN: Well, it's definitely tied to agriculture practices like drainage and plowing, and getting in the fields early when some of the early nesters like pintails are sitting on their nests. They are coming in with their discs and drags and working the ground getting ready to plant. The birds are either displaced or their equipment is destroying the nest. But how do you tell landowners that they can't do that on land that they have to put into production? Especially when it's good land, and I'm not talking about poor land. I don't know how you'd convince them, unless Canada goes to a WRP program or a CREP program or something like that in the future and able to tie some of the lands up there. It would be a big help to some of the duck populations, but until that happens I think our duck populations are going to go down. I think we definitely have to get a handle on predation too. I'm very concerned about waterfowl predation; coons. I had never seen opossum when I was living down in Benson. Then I came out here and now they are very common, as are the coons. I think we've got to get a hand on some of the predators. And I think we at least have to get the FWS and the DNR conservation organizations to sit down and discuss these issues and that hasn't happened. The only organization that has tried to deal with predation is DELTA. They've got a lot good work and studies out there. I think we've got to get on that predation problem.

MR. LEECH: Can you give some of your perspective on some of the things we, as the conservation community need to do to engage the political members who can change agricultural policy and land use decisions. As you mentioned, agriculture is the key to reversing the trends in waterfowl. But what are some of the things that can be done to reverse the trends?

MR. KUFRIN: I think what we have to do is work more diligently with our partners and get them and their members more involved, and in the loop. We need to get their members active on a more personal lever rather than just donations. I think that is vitally important. There are so many people who are members who I think would be happy to get involved. I think Pheasants Forever does a good job of that. You see a lot of instances where there is a Senator, or President Bush was out there before the election at a farm in southern Minnesota Pheasants Forever was out there with their national officials. They are meeting with President Bush and some of the landowners out there giving them the opportunity to speak. They were soliciting input and ideas. I think we've got to get people more involved. That's easy to say, but actually getting them involved is the difficult part, but it's imperative. It's always nice to send in twenty-five dollars for a

donation but when you start pushing dirt of planting native prairie, it doesn't go too far. It's better than nothing.

MR. LEECH: Well I appreciate your perspectives. I think it was valuable for you to share them.

MR. KURFIN: I wanted to mention something too Jim, about the agencies and the predation issues. I am very concerned about predation. I think we have a severe problem and I don't know if we're ever going to get a handle on that because of the "anti's". But I think we've got to deal with it.

MR. LEECH: Well, as you well know, one of the ways we're dealing with it is to have a block size of our land mass greater, so that we get the large cannids to wipe out the little egg suckers.

MR. KUFRIN: I know it has been successful because I've talked to people from DELTA and gone through some of their sites. I've gone through Morris WMD and talked to trappers out there. One of the trappers in the spring told me, "When they asked me to start trapping I never thought there would be enough animals to keep up with the trapping. But I am simply amazed with the number of predators on the land! There's no way we can keep up with them!" There is that many! I think Al Radke had asked him if he was worried that some of his fall income would be taken away because there would be less critters to trap in the fall. This fellow who is a trapper said, "Absolutely not, you couldn't dent the predators in one spring out here. It has to be a consistent effort." He said that there were more animals out there than he ever thought possible. I think the trapper was from Blenwood, or Bruton, or Hancock or someplace like that. But he seemed real honest.

MR. LEECH: Those are good perspectives.

MR. KUFRIN: Yes, and I think we have to take all of the angles into perspective and that's the only way we're going to get ahead of this wreck right now. I'd sure like to be able to go back out there and see flocks of canvasback coming in to Holleburg Lake or Lake Hassell or Lake Moore where you'd see flights of 40 or 60 coming in. And Redheads with their wings ready to knock your eardrums out with their rushing sound. And ringnecks and scop. I can remember some of the hunts that we had in Saskatchewan that were just absolutely incredible for canvasbacks. A friend of mine and I decided that we were never going to have the opportunity to have a good canvasback shoot. We were born too late for that. We said that this fall when we went up to Saskatchewan we going to pay special attention to see if we couldn't get in a good canvas back shoot on one day on Little Quill Lake. It was a heck of a job. We had to pull the boat out with my wood decoys and the guns and shells and all the gear. We had to pull the boat about 250 yards over the meadow grass first to get it to the waters edge. Then we had go through the mud,

then some solid stuff to get out to the bull rushes in the northwest corner of the lake. But there was canvasback out there. We had gone out and scouted a couple of days. This friend and myself went out and in two days, we shot two limits of drake canvasback. And we didn't shoot a hen, nor did we have one cripple. The dog picked up all of the birds. We shot a couple of geese during those days too. It was just the most incredible hunting experience I've ever had! I would certainly hope that some younger people will have the same experience some day. But I don't know if they will just because those habitats have disappeared up there so quickly. The predators have become so ingrained up there. We never saw a raccoon when we first started going up in 1969. I don't imagine the first one we saw was until probably 1975. After that it just seemed like they took off. And skunks, fox, crows and ravens are bad too.

MR. LEECH: I'd like to interject a little historical perspective about your two-day limit of drake canvasbacks. Having hunted with you in the past, and knowing how you shoot, the only way that you could have gotten two limits of drake canvasbacks was to let those birds land in your decoys and then shoot the drakes.

MR. KUFRIN: Hey, they were right over the decoys! Stevie Sureshot! That's about the time we first started using steel shot. We were among those who were not reluctant to use steel shot too. We found that steel shot was just as effective and just as deadly as lead shot.

MR. LEECH: As long as you let the birds come in.

MR. KUFRIN: Yes, and we were very proud of the number of birds we retrieved and did not lose with steel shot. But these were wonderful shots. It was small bunches of one to five. We didn't shoot any thing over six in a bunch. If there were hens in there we let them go. We were just shooting drakes. That was it.

MR. LEECH: That was a very memorable hunt, I can tell just from listening to you tell about it.

MR. KUFRIN: Yes, it was! Absolutely incredible. I fried my camera in the alkaloid water. I bent too far over. My camera just exploded. I was never able to get any photos of the results of the hunt, or even of us out there that day!

MR. LEECH: Well, you've got drake canvasbacks hanging out your auditorium here that are living proof of what you did.

MR. KUFRIN: That's right.

MR. LEECH: Well thank you, I wanted to capture those sentiments.

MR. KUFRIN: No, thank you.

MS. NORTON: What was the high point of your career with FWS, if you had one?

MR. KUFRIN: Just being able to work with biologists like Jim who are always so pumped up about doing what's right for the resources. Just having the opportunity to go in to work each day and be associated with gentlemen and gentlewomen like Jim who show that conservation means so much to them. It's really a pleasure.

MS. NORTON: Did you have a low point in your career?

MR. KUFRIN: Yeah, finding out that I couldn't go back to work after discovering that I had a brain tumor.

MS. NORTON: We're sorry about that too. But as you progress, maybe you'll still be able to do a few things.

MR. KUFRIN: Oh, I hope so.

MS. NORTON: Did you ever have a really humorous experience while you were with FWS?

MR. KUFRIN: Oh, I'm sure because the people were so decent to work with. Everything was always pleasant.

MS. NORTON: Did you every have a dangerous or frightening experience out in the field?

MR. KUFRIN: No, I really wasn't out in the field that much. It was much less than I would have wished to be. But I guess they felt I was getting a few things accomplished in the office and that's where they wanted to keep me.

MS. NORTON: What would you like to tell other people who don't work for FWS about your career?

MR. KUFRIN: If they would ever want to encourage their children or anybody else to go into conservation, I would certainly encourage them to consider applying with FWS. It's just a top-notch outfit with top-notch people. There is a lot of honesty and common sense. I'm always heavy on those too. That makes me so proud to see these folks who are playing with the taxpayers money who have all of this honesty and common sense. I think they are doing the right thing with those dollars. I think that's wonderful.

MS. NORTON: Do you have any photographs or documents that you would like to donate or share with the Archives?

MR. KUFRIN: I've got so much stuff. A lot of my writing is in the MWA magazines. But lets go through the tapes. Thank you it's been a real pleasure getting to know you, and Jim, it's been a pleasure having you too.

MS. NORTON: No, it's I who really want to thank you!